



The Man Who Walked Between the Towers New York City

Subject(s): Language Arts, Social Studies

Grade Level(s): 2-3

Learning Objectives

- Students will read a book about New York City.
- Students will watch a video.
- Students will use predicting as a comprehension strategy.
- Students will create an illustration.
- Students will research the World Trade Center.
- Students will present an oral report to class.
- Students will perform a circus act for the class.
- Students will write and illustrate a story about a New York City daredevil.

Video Resource

The Man Who Walked Between the Towers

Written and Illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein

Grades: K-4

Lexile Level: 480; Guided Reading Level: N

Themes: Biography, History, People at work

Running Time: 10:16

Plot Summary: Inspired by the true story of Philippe Petit, a young French aerialist, and his daring 1974 high-wire walk between the twin towers of the World Trade Center. The excitement, suspense, and reverence of that feat are brought to breathtaking life in this animated adaptation.

Nonfiction Resource

New York City

By David F. Marx

Grades: 1-2; Ages: 6-7

Level: 740; Guided Reading Level: I

Description: Introduces readers to basic geographic facts about the climate, industries, and landmarks of New York City.

Before Viewing the Video

1. Introduce students to the vocabulary. You can write vocabulary words on index cards and place them around the room, or pair words with pictures. If you have ESL students, make sure that you introduce the vocabulary words to them a few days before the lesson.

cable: a strong rope made of metal wires

construction worker: a person whose job is to build buildings

juggle: the act of tossing objects in the air and keeping them moving

perform: to display a talent for the public

roof: the top of a building

subway: trains that travel in tunnels beneath the ground

terrifying: frightening; scary

2. Ask students to make a few predictions regarding what they think the video will be about.
3. Activate students background knowledge by having them brainstorm about what they know about the World Trade Center. Most students will only know of the World Trade Center because of the events of September 11, 2001, so be prepared to provide a brief historical background about the buildings. Some suggested guiding questions:
 - Where was the World Trade Center located?
 - What was the World Trade Center used for?
 - What did the World Trade Center look like?

After-Viewing Activities

1. Revisit students' predictions. Was the story about what they thought it would be about? How is it different? What surprised them the most?
2. The story often tells of how free Philippe felt as he walked on the wire between the towers. Have students discuss the feeling of happiness when they are doing something that they love to do. Have students create an illustration of the things they love to do the most. Encourage students to tell about their illustration and share how they feel when engaged in the activity they rendered.
3. In small groups, older students can use the internet to conduct further research about the World Trade Center. Possible guiding questions may be:
 - What other feats or acts of daring were attempted on the towers?
 - How much did the towers sway in the wind?
 - How long did it take to construct the towers?Have each group present their research to the class.
4. Have younger students pretend that they are high wire walkers. Stretch a rope across your classroom floor and provide students with props: poles, umbrellas. Have them give a high-wire performance.

Paired-Text Activities

1. Discuss with students that both stories are nonfiction: one focuses on a single event while the other title provides information about a variety of things in New York City. Explain to students that many people have attempted or accomplished feats of daring in and around famous structures in New York City, for example:
 - Harry the Human Fly, who parachuted off the Flatiron Building.
 - George Willis, who climbed down the facade of the World Trade Center.
 - Terry De Baux, who attempted to bungee jump off the torch of the Statue of Liberty.

In small groups, have students base a fictional character on one of these people or invent a New York City daredevil of their own. Have them write a story of their daredevils death-defying feat in the style of *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*. Students can illustrate their stories and then share them with the class. Younger students can simply create an illustration and then share their stories orally.

Further Research

Explore with the students the related Web links about New York City that accompany this selection.

Assessment

Have the students play the educational games about *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* and *New York City*. Review their results to assess their comprehension of the words and events in the story, as well as their ability to distinguish between fiction and nonfiction.

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